After years of looking at the mortal body, of seeing afflictions that horrified—cleft palates, leprosy, epilepsy, women hemorrhaging in childbirth—after decades of devotion to saving bodies he did not think could be saved, of opening wounds to see only black mystery, what did he feel when he first heard of the man who could heal with a word? As a doctor, how could he believe? But case after case—blindness, a crippled hand, even (dare he write it?) death—he documented the miraculous treatment. So simple: touch and a word. The body and the voice. The same treatment he had tried for years and failed. Wouldn’t his mortally wounded heart be jealous? Even after his conversion, as he was learning to perfect dying unto himself, after so many years of seeing death and knowing it still awaited him, is it no wonder that he was the only apostle to write the prodigal son, releasing the anger of the son who never strayed?

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